

A Pleasant Ballad of King Henry II. And the MILLER of MANSFIELD:

Shewing how he was Entertain'd and Lodg'd at the Miller's House.

HENRY our Royal King would ride a Hunting,
To the green Forest, so pleasant and so fair
To have the Hart Chas'd, and dainty Does tripping,
Unto merry Sheerwood his Nobles repair;
Hawk and Hound were unbound, all Things prepar'd
For the fame, to the Game, with good Regard.

All along Summer's Day rode the King pleasantly,
With all his Princes and Nobles each one,
Chasing the Hart and Hound, and the Buck gallantly,
Till the dark Evening forc'd him to go Home.
Then at last riding fast, he had lost quite
All his Lords in the Wood, in a dark Night.

Wand'ring thus warily all alone merrily,
With a rude Miller he met with at last,
Asking the ready Way unto fair Nottingham,
Sir, quoth the Miller, your Way you have lost.
Yet I think what I think, Truth for to say,
You do not likely ride out of your Way.

What dost thou think of me quoth our King merrily?
Passing thy Judgment upon me so brief.
Good-faith, said the Miller, I mean not to flatter thee,
I guess thee to be some Gentleman-Thief.
Stand thee back in the Dark, light thee not down.
Left with my staff I crack thy Knave's Crown.

Thou hast abus'd me much, quoth the King, saying
I am a Gentleman, and Lodging I lack,
Thou hast not said the Miller, one Groat in thy Purse,
All thy Inheritance hangs on thy Back.
I have Gold to discharge all that I call.
If it were Forty Pound I would pay all.

If thou beest a true Man, then quoth the Miller.
I swear by my Toll-Dish I will lodge thee all Night,
Here's my Hand, quoth the King, that I was ever,
Nay sit, quoth the Miller thou mayst be a Spright.
Better I'll know thee e'er Hands I do take.
With none but honest Men Hands will I shake.

Thus they went along unto the Miller's House,
Where they were feething of Puddings and Souse.
The Miller first enter'd in, and after him the King.
Never came he in so smoaky a House.

Now quoth he, let me see here what you are,
Quoth our King, look your Fill, and do not spare.
Like thy Countenance, thou hast an honest Face,
With my Son Richard this Night thou shalt lie.
Quoth his Wife, by my Troth, he is a handsome Youth.
Yet it's best Husband to deal warily.
Art thou no Run-a-way, prithee Youth tell?
Shew me thy Passport, then all shall be well.

Then the King presently making low Courtesy,
With his Hat in his Hand thus did he say.
I have no Passport, nor ever was Servitor,
But a poor Courtier rode out of my Way.
And for your Kindness here offered me,
I will requite you in every Degree.

Then to the Miller his Wife whisper'd secretly,
Saying, it seems this Youth's of good Kin.
Both by his Apparel, and eke his Manners,
To turn him out certainly 'twere a great Sin.
Yea, quoth he, you may see he hath some Grace,
Well he doth speak to his betters in Place.

Well quoth the Miller's Wife, young Man welcome,
And tho' I say it, well lodg'd thou shalt be;
Fresh Straw I will have laid on the Bed so brave,
Good brown Hempen sheets likewise for thee.
Ay, quoth the good Man, and when that is done,
You shall lie with no worse than our own Son.

Nay first quoth Richard, good Fellow tell me true,
Hast thou no Creepers within thy gay Hose?
Or art thou not troubled with the Scabbado?
I pray quoth the King, what Things are those?
Art thou not Lowfy nor Scabby, quoth he?
If thou beest, surely thou liest not with me.

This made the King suddenly to laugh most heartily,
'Till the Tears trickled down from his Eyes.
Then to their Supper they were set orderly,
With a Bag-Pudding, and good Apple-Pies.
Nappy Ale good and stale in a brown Bowl,
Which did about the Board merrily rowl.

Here quoth the Miller, good Fellow I drink to thee,
And to all Cuckolds wherever they be;
I pledge you quoth the King, and thank you heartily,
For you are welcome in every Degree.
And here in like Manner I drink to your Son,
Do so, quoth Richard, but quick let it come.

Wife quoth the Miller, fetch me forth Light-Foot,
That we of his Sweetness a little may taste.
A fine Ven'son-Pasty then she brought presently.
Eat Sir, said he, but pray make no Waste.
Here's dainty Light-Foot in Faith said the King,
I never before eat so dainty a Thing.

I wis, quoth Richard, no Dainty at all it is,
For we eat of it every Day.
In what Place said the King, can be bought like to this?
We never pay one Penny for it by Fay.

From merry Sheerwood we fetch it home here,
Now and then we make bold with our King's Deer.

Then I think said our King, that it is Venison,
Each Fool said Richard full well doth know that:
Never are we without two or three under the Roof,
Very well flesh'd, and excellent fat:

But prithee say nothing where ever you go,
We would not for Two Pence the King should it know.

Doubt not then said the King my promis'd Secrecy.
The King shall never know more on't for me.
A Cup of Lamb's-wool they drank to him then,
And to their Beds they pass'd presently.
The Nobles next Morning went all up-and-down,
For to seek the King in every Town.

At last at the Miller's House soon the saw him plain,
As he was mourning upon his fair Steed.
To whom they came presently falling upon their Knees.
Which made Miller's Heart woefully bleed.
Shaking and quaking before them he stood,
Thinking he should be cut off by the Rood.

The King perceiving him fearful and trembling,
Drew forth his Sword, and nothing he said.
The Miller down did fall, crying before them all,
Doubting the King would cut off his Head.
But his Courtesy for to requite,
Gave him a Living, and made him a Knight.

The Second P A R T.

When as our Royal King came home from Nottingham
And with his Nobles at Westminster lay,
Recounting the Pastimes and Sport that they had ta'n,
In their late Progress along by the Way.
Of them all great and small he did protest,
The Miller of Mansfield's Sport liked him best.

And my Lords quoth the King I am determined
Against St. George's sumptuous Feast.
That this old Miller, our late dubbed Knight,
With his Son Richard be one of the Guest,
For in this merriment 'tis my Desire
To talk with the Jolly Knight and the Young 'Squire.

When the Lords did see this the Kings Pleasantness,
They were right joyful and glad in their Hearts.
A Pursuivant there was sent upon the Business,
The which had oftentimes been in those Parts,
When he came to the Place where he did dwell,
His Message orderly then he did tell.

God save your Worship then said the Messenger,
And grant your Lady her Heart's Desire:
And to your Son Richard good Fortune and Happiness,
That sweet Young Gentleman, the happy Squire.
Our King doth greet you, and thus doth say,
You must come to the Court on St. George's Day.

Therefore in any Case fail not to be in Place.
I wis quoth the Miller, this is an odd Jest.
What shall we do there? faith I am half afraid,
I doubt quoth Richard be hang'd at the least.
Nay quoth the Messenger he doth mistake:
The King hath provided a Feast for thy sake.

Then quoth the Miller, now by my Troth Messenger
Thou hast contented my Worship right well.
Hold, here's Three Farthings to quit thy Gentleness,
For these happy Tidings which thou dost me tell.
Let me see; here's to thee, tell to our King.
We'll wait on his Masterhip in every Thing.

The Pursuivant smiled at their Simplicity,
And making many Legs, took the Reward.
And taking then his Leave with great Humility,
To the King's Court again he repair'd.
Shewing unto his Grace in each Degree,
The Miller's most liberal Gift and Bounty.

When he was gone away, thus did the Miller say,
Here comes Expences and Charges indeed.
Now we must needs be brave, tho' we spend all we have,
For of few Garments we have got much Need.
Of Horses and Servant-men we must have store,
With Bridles and Saddls, and twenty Things more.

Tush, Sir John, quoth his Wife, never fret nor frown,
You shall be at no more Charges for me;
For I will turn and trim up my Ruffet Gown,

With every Thing as fine as may be.
And on our Mill-Horses full swift we will ride,
With Pillows and Pannels, as we shall provide.

In this most stately fort rode they unto the Court,
Their Jolly Son Richard foremost of all:
Who set up by Hap a Cock's Feather in his Cap.
So they jett'd down towards the King's Hall.
The merry old Miller with his Hands on his Side,
His Wife like Maid Margerum laugh'd at that Tide.

The King and his Nobles who heard of his coming,
Meeting this gallant Knight with his gay Train,
Welcome Sir Knight said he, with this bright Lady.
Good Sir John Cockle once welcome again.
And so is the Squire of Courage so free.

Quoth Dick, abots on you, do you know me?
Quoth our King gently, how can I forget thee?
Thou wast my Bed-fellow, that what I what
But I think of a Trick. Tell me that prichee Dick,
How thou with Farting didst make the Bed hot.
Thou Whoreson happy Knaves, then said the Knight,
Talk handsome to the King, or else go hite.

The King and his Courtiers laugh'd heartily at this,
While the King took them both by the Hand.
With Ladies and their Maids like to the Queen of Spades
The Miller's Wife did so orderly stand.
A Milk-maid's Curt'sy at every Word.
Then the Folks down were set at the Side-Board.

Where the King Royally in princely Majesty
Sat at his Dinner with Joy and Delight.
When they had eat well to Jestling then they fell,
And the King then drank unto the Knight.
Here's to you in good Ale, or wine and Beer,
Thanking you for your Country Cheer.

Quoth Sir John Cockle, I'll Pledge you a Bottle,
Was it the best Ale in Nottinghamshire.
But then said the King, I do think of a Thing,
Some of your Light-Foot I wish we had here.
Oh! Oh! said Richard right well may I say it,
'Tis Knavery to eat it and then to betray it.

Why art thou angry, quoth the King merrily?
In Faith I do take it very unkind.
I thought thou wouldst pledge me in Ale Wine or Beer,
You're like to stay quoth Dick, until I've din'd.
You feed us with shattering Dishes so small.
Z---ds a Black-Pudding is worth them all.

Ay marry quoth the King, that were a dainty Thing
If a Man could but get here one to eat;
With that Dick arose, and took one out of his Hose,
Which with the Heat of his Breeches did sweat.
The King made a proffer to snatch it away,
'Tis Meat for your Master, good Sir you must stay.

Thus in great Merriment was the Time wholly spent,
And then the Ladies prepared to Dance,
Old Sir, John Cockle and Richard incontinent,
Unto this Practice the King did Advance;
Here with the Ladies such Sport they did Make,
The Nobles with Laughing did make their Sides ach.

Then Sir John Cockle the King call'd unto him,
And of merry Sheerwood made him Overseer,
Giving him out of hand three hundred pound Yearly,
Saying, take heed you steal no more Deer.
And once a Quarter let's here have your View.
And thus, Sir John Cockle I'll bid you adieu.